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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: POPE'S COMMENTS FUEL ANGER AGAINST THE
WEST

11. Summary: A UAE columnist in "Emaratallyoum" is not satisfied with the Pope's apology. A columnist in "Al-Ittihad" considers the Pope's statements as a gift to Al-Qaeda. A columnist in "Al-Khaleej" suggests that the Pope's "offense" is done on purpose and was timed with other attacks against Islam. End Summary.

12. A UAE columnist, Hamdan Al-Shaair, wrote on Dubai-Based Arabic Daily "Emaratallyoum," (circulation 20,000) 09/19 op-ed:

"We have been always accused of refusing Western values because of our belief in conspiracy theories. It seems now that our belief was correct. The Pope in his speech did not only offend Muslims but used a prehistoric dialogue between two 'nobodies' to prove that Islam is a doctrine that is not based on reason. There are several points to deduce from his speech; first was the timing of his speech and how it coincided with the 5th memorial period for Sept 11, which came right after Bush had called Muslims Fascists. This timing came as part of an explicit political Western agenda whose motives are Islamophobia crusade-based and whose objectives are to intensify enmity between the East and the West. Second, it is well known that the citing of an idea in a speech is usually prepared in advance in order to deliver the idea in a way tailored to the reader or listener. Therefore it is stupid to believe that the Pope did not mean, through the quotations which he used, that Islam does not contradict reason or exhort terror. Third, to link spreading Islam with the use of swords and killings contradicts the historical facts. Islam had spread through the force of logic... while Christianity in Europe spread through the atrocities caused by Catholics who killed non-Catholic Christians... Muslims should demand an apology from the entire Catholic Church, especially since the Church has previously apologized to the Jews for laying the fault on them for Jesus' crucifixion. But will a verbal apology be enough? Shouldn't we call for a real apology to let us live in peace a nations without someone offending our firm beliefs?"

13. Under the headline "From Bush to the Pope... Gifts to Al-Qaeda", a columnist, Abdulwahab Badrkhan, wrote on Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic-language daily "Al-Ittihad" 09/19 (circulation 65,000) op-ed:

"Not a long time ago President Bush used the term Islamic fascism. Now there is the statement from the head of the Catholic Church on

Jihad... What was not considered well in the Pope's "mistake" is the damage done to "moderate Islam" and the vast majority of Muslims who suffer the biggest loss from the Pope's opinions. The frustration [of Muslims] is so bad. One sarcastically predicted that Ayman Al-Zawahiri will send the Pope a thank you letter for the gift which he has presented to Al-Qaeda by confirming what Al-Qaeda promotes of Western Christian attitudes towards Islam and Muslims."

¶4. Under headline "The Pope and the "cartoons", a columnist, Jafar Mohammed Ahmed, wrote a 09/19 op-ed on Sharjah-based Arabic daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"It is a mistake to think that the Pope's anti Islamic statement is just a slip of the tongue. It is not, given the timing of the statement which came at a time when the Muslims' angry reaction to the offensive Danish cartoons is not quiet yet. The West shocks us again with a fresh offense against the Prophet Mohammed, this time from the Pope. What is shocking is the fact that the Pope's statement came at the same period of time when Islam was described as fascist and Muslims as terrorists. These descriptions came from Western media and politicians. These are not purely coincidental."

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